

4-1951

April-May 1951

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Recommended Citation

Kretzmann, O.P., "April-May 1951" (1951). *Campus Commentary*. 43.
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Campus Commentary

VOLUME 1

APRIL - MAY 1951

No. 6

Dear Brother:

As I write this, I imagine you are either attending a pastoral conference or have just returned from one. These gatherings are a great and traditional mark of our life in the Missouri Synod. My impression is that the program for these regular meetings of our clergy are more thoughtfully prepared than ever before. It is true, of course, that occasionally one hears about a conference which might just as well have been held in a trout stream or on a golf course. The majority, however, seem to make a definite contribution to the solidarity of mind and spirit which is so important for our Synod today.

My own favorites have always been the "Winkel-Konferenzen". Perhaps they have done more for the Missouri Synod than many other factors in our history. There is, of course, always the brother who pontificates on every question from the financial situation in Synod to the meaning of the Revelation of St. John. There is also the brother who is perennially concerned about the doings of another brother. There are also always two or three who feel loudly and vehemently that something ought to be done about something. All these I regard with affectionate interest. They have been with us since 1839, and I hope they will live long. They are an essential part of the Church Militant.

* * *

Talking about conferences and in-service education I would like to call your attention to another part of this general problem. I wonder if you have looked closely at the institutes presented on the campus of the University during the summer. Many of them ought to be of very real interest to some of our brethren. Please remember that we shall be able to house and feed you at a very reasonable cost and that we sincerely hope you will be able to attend. In case you have mislaid the little, yellow folder which described the institutes, I am here listing once more the titles and the dates of the individual institutes and seminars to be conducted during the summer months.

Liturgical Institute	— — —	June 5 - 7, 1951	Circuit Representatives	— —	July 23, 1951
Labor Management	— — —	June 11 - 12, 1951	Public Relations	— — —	July 24 - 25, 1951
Institute of Christian Thought	—	June 19 - 21, 1951	Rural Life	— — — —	July 26 - 27, 1951
Church Music Institute	— —	July 2 - 6, 1951	Race Relations	— — —	July 30 - 31, 1951
Religion and Culture	— —	July 15 - 21, 1951	Social Work	— — — —	Aug. 27 - 30, 1951

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Still talking about education . . . I am aware of the fact that this occasional epistle should not discuss Synodical matters. They should be left for other and better hands. At the present moment, however, I am somewhat concerned about the alarms and excursions throughout Synod over the matter of the introduction of the Senior College into our educational system. I have already heard and seen an occasional brother mounting his horse and riding off furiously in all directions. One comment may therefore be permissible here. Whatever the ultimate decision of the proper authorities may be, the rest of us must never lose sight of the purposes and objectives of the Senior College. It is not to train scholars. It is not to foster the acquisition of additional social graces. These may all be good by-products, but the great, continuing fundamental purpose of our entire system must be to train pastors and teachers for the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. This has been our strength for one hundred years. We have had a clear, sharp, simple objective, and it should not become fuzzy now. Our whole system is geared to the production of parish pastors — the men who do the work where the Holy Spirit lives and breathes through Word and Sacrament. If we forget that for the shoddy advantages of another degree or whatever it may be, we shall fall headlong into the Protestant swamp. End of comment.

* * *

If you have any children at home between the ages of 16 and 22, you are probably sharply aware of the harmful effects the continuing uncertainty in our manpower situation is producing in our younger generation. At the present moment we at the University still do not know what the ultimate picture will be in September, 1951. May I again appeal to you to send us the names of boys and girls who should be going to college during these years? That is one of the simplest and most important things that our brethren can do for us in order to maintain a level of enrollment which will be of the highest possible service to the church. Even now it can be said that unless a shooting war starts all over the world many of them will be permitted to finish their college education. By the way, many strange and false things are being said these days in the name of patriotism. We must never forget to tell our young people that the highest and most intelligent patriotism in these troubled days does not necessarily mean blind rushing off into the Armed Forces. The beating of the drums in the name of patriotism is often not only the last refuge of scoundrels, but also the last refuge of those who have lost their faith in almost everything else. There is a time when the demands of God and the Church and the long years that lie before us must be considered more important than the shallow patriotism of orators on the Fourth of July. You will, therefore, do well to advise your young people to plan their futures as quietly and calmly as possible in these days of unrest and indecision.

O. P. Kretzmann
President

Very sincerely yours,

When these notes reach you, you may be thinking of your vacation. A preacher's vacation should probably be something totally different from the ways of the world. A good program would certainly include a quiet place — one good book — and as much time as possible for meditation. The meditation should be centered about the great facts of our common life in the church. I have found it especially valuable to fix the mind and spirit on those virtues in God which we so seldom find in the hearts of men. This is rest and peace in the sense in which our Lord spoke of it in the upper room.

RANDOM NOTES: I am still receiving an occasional letter from a brother who has thought about the problem of confirmation. As I have said before, this is clearly a topic which should receive some earnest and intelligent attention. One of my correspondents suggested that the time of the admission to the Sacrament be separated from the date of confirmation. This would make both things a good deal more flexible. In a few weeks we shall publish the chapel addresses presented under the Cross Memorial Foundation by Prof. Richard Caemmerer and Prof. Martin J. Neeb. Both series are excellent, and I hope to be able to send you a copy in the very near future. . . . You may have heard that we have lost our basketball coach, Mr. Wilbur N. Allen. At the present moment we are screening a large list of candidates. If you happen to have anyone to suggest, I would be very happy to hear from you. It will probably be mid-summer before we can make a definite selection. Intercollegiate athletics have gone a long way since I battled .175 on the seminary baseball team and the only reward for participation was a letter. It has now become a very complex and intricate business which requires strong leadership and definite moral qualities in the men who coach the various athletic teams. I consider the position of coach one of the most important on our campus. . . . A last reminder. I hope you will be able to attend one or more of our institutes on the campus this summer. . . .

Clearly this is a volume which can be used by some of you in your work.

"Psychologists proudly claim that theirs is a useful science. So it is, some of it. It is not the intention of this book to deny or belittle the useful things that science has done, but neither is it necessary to say much here about the achievements of science, because there are so many science publicists already busy doing that. Psychology has a number of fine achievements to its credit; treatment of war-shocked soldiers, and far better understanding of some kinds of mental illnesses, are two outstanding examples, and some others are aptitude testing (now developed to a fine art), job analysis, psychology of advertising, attention-getting techniques, and methods of "motivating" other people. But for all the usefulness of these, the really important questions in human life are hardly touched upon at all by psychologists. Do liars come to believe their own lies? Advertising men their own bunk? Is pleasure the same as happiness? Is it better to have loved and lost than never to have loved, or not be able to love? Is there only one kind of love, or more than one kind, and which kinds are compatible with irritation? With anger? With fear? With hatred of the beloved? You could take course after course in psychology, all offered in the name of the higher scientific bolderdash, and in the end not be the least bit wiser about these desperately important and practical matters."

graph may give you a little taste of the tone and content of the book:

By an illogical leap of the mind I am reminded that I wanted to call your attention to a book which has done many of us a great deal of good. It is "Science is a Sacred Cow" by Anthony Standen. Mr. Standen is a first-rate chemist with a record of teaching at MIT, St. John's College and Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, New York. He is now engaged in editing the Chemical Encyclopedia. Please note that he is a scientist of standing and repute. He himself says of his book: "One of the great sophists of the world is the over-extension of the scientific method into realms where it does not belong. To expose sophists is the aim of my book, but it is a tricky business." If you have some extra time for reading this summer, you will find the volume not only illuminating but also enjoyable. Mr. Standen knows how to write. It will be particularly valuable if you are dealing with some young people who have been touched by the tendency of some scientists to roam all over the landscape, far beyond their assigned realm of thought and activity. The following paragraph may give you a little taste of the tone and content of the book:

One of the most hopeful signs on our Synodical horizon just now is the fact that the philosophy and methods of Christian education are being discussed more frequently and thoroughly than ever before. Recently I attended a meeting of our secondary school administrators, and the entire program was relevant and illuminating. There was a time when our approach to the problem of Christian education was too negative. We tried to build a case for it by attacking the completely irrational and secular approach to education. That is now happily abandoned. On the other hand, I should mention a conference which I had a few weeks ago with a student from one of our large Midwestern universities. He is enrolled in the usual introductory course entitled "The Problems of Philosophy". When they came to the philosophy of religion, the instructor said that he would have this topic presented by one of the men from the science departments who was known here and there on American campuses. One would really imagine that the experience of the Western world for the past thirty years has eliminated that type of thing quite thoroughly. An exact parallel would be if my chemistry department would ask me to present a lecture on the value and significance of chemistry to human life and progress. In brief it seems as if the shoddy thinking and shallow, pseudo-intellectuality which have confused some parts of the American educational scene are still very much with us. A sad business.